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Nevada Gets A+ for Child Abuse Death Transparency

(Carson City, NV) — The scorecard released Tuesday by the University of San Diego School of Law and child advocacy group [First Star](#) gives Nevada 98 out of 100 points for its disclosure policies related to child fatalities. Nevada is one of only four states to earn an A+.

This second annual edition of [State Secrecy and Child Deaths in the US](#) grades all 50 states and the District of Columbia on their laws and regulations pertaining to public disclosure of child abuse or neglect deaths and near deaths. The areas evaluated include: public disclosure of findings on child fatalities or near fatalities; state policies on reporting which are codified in statute; and ease of access to information on child deaths.

“I am extremely proud of our continued goal for transparency and national recognition in regards to this piece of our system, as well as, our continued collaboration with Clark County Department of Family Services and Washoe County Department of Social Services,” said Amber Howell, Administrator for the Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS). “This process and its activities are a statewide effort and have continued to be successful due to the commitment of leadership across the state among all three child welfare agencies.”

Howell attributes Nevada's high score in part to the work of legislators who, in previous sessions, revised statute to make necessary changes to support improvements in reporting child deaths. In addition, statewide policies which have been implemented in the last five years also increase the level of accountability by publicly disclosing system information.

"In order to prevent future fatalities, we need to understand where the system is weak and what external partners we need to be engaging," Howell said. "We have an opportunity to turn tragic incidences into opportunities for improvement, but we have to be open to accepting the data and be committed to learn from it, analyze it and make it better. This report is validation for our state that Nevada is doing it right," said Howell.

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The public disclosure process is available on the Division of Child and Family Services website: http://www.dcf.state.nv.us/CW_Policies/0400/0401_Public_Disclosure.pdf

All qualifying public disclosures are posted within 48 hours of a fatality and within 5 days after a near fatality on this site: http://www.dcf.state.nv.us/DCFS_ChildFatalities_Disclosures.htm